



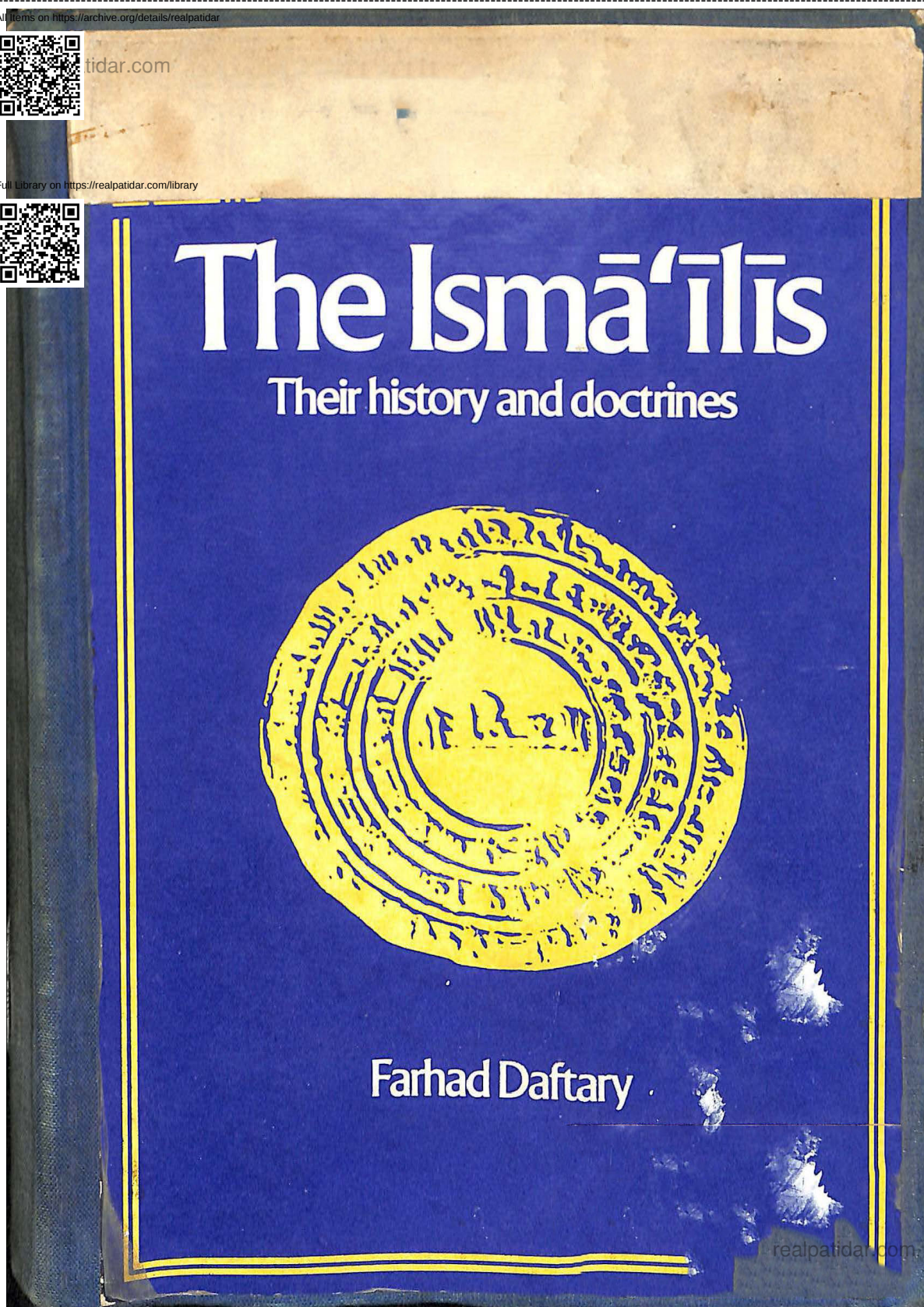
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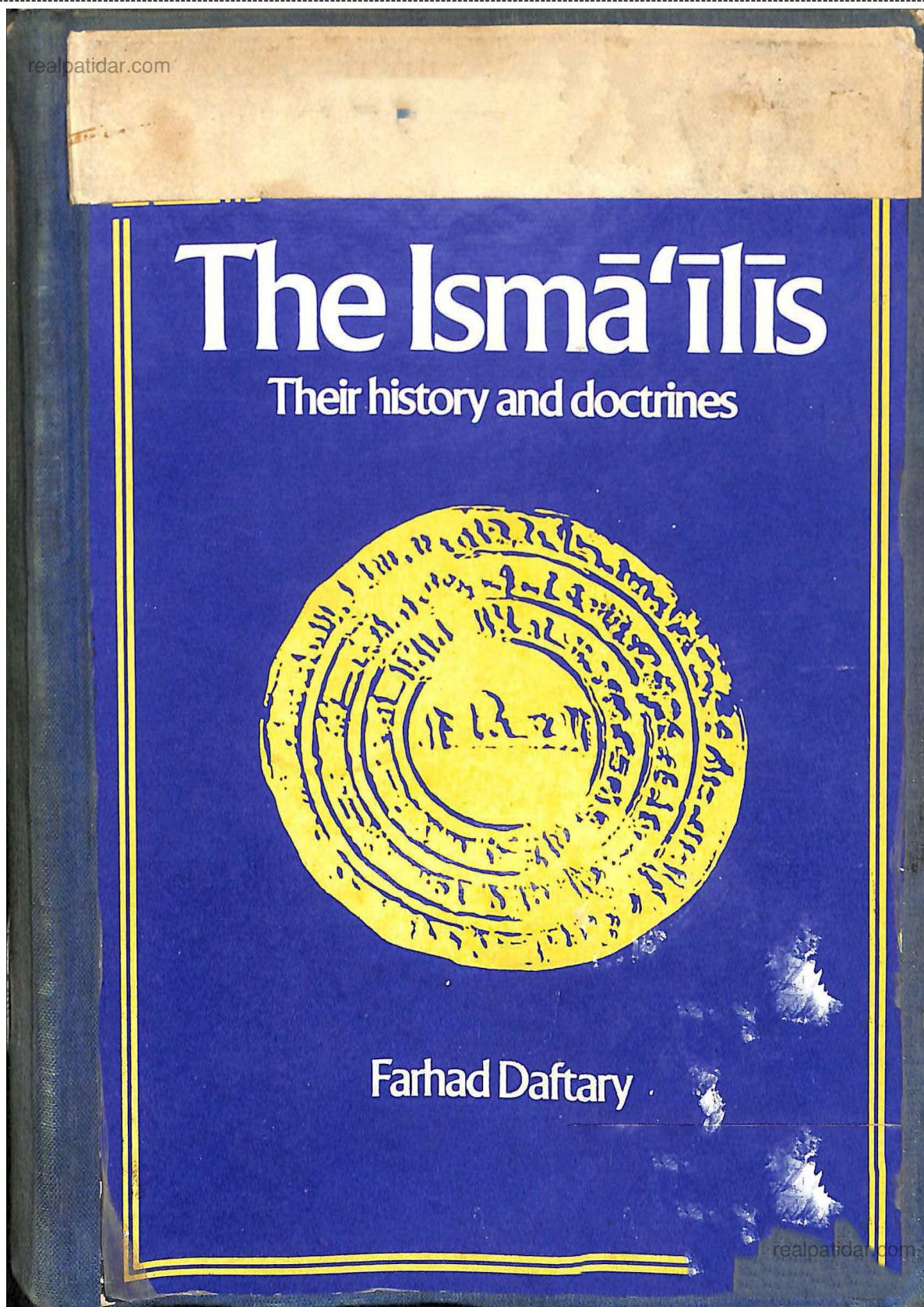
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and later the Ottomans. Meanwhile, a third Nizārī tradition had come into existence in the upper Oxus region, where Ismā'īlism had been introduced several centuries earlier. The Ismā'īlīs of Badakhshān and the surrounding areas evidently acknowledged the Nizārī Imāms sometime before the fall of Alamūt. The Nizārīs of those remote parts remained unaffected by the Mongol invasion of Persia and during the post-Alamūt period developed a somewhat distinctive literary tradition of their own, according particular importance to the works of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. They also preserved the bulk of the extant Nizārī literature of the Alamūt and post-Alamūt periods written in the Persian language. It was in the post-Alamūt period that Nizārism had its greatest success on the Indian subcontinent. The Indian Nizārī community, designated chiefly by the term Khoja, grew steadily under the leadership of its local leaders or *pīrs* until it became the main stronghold of the Nizārī sect. The Nizārī Khojas, too, developed a specific religious tradition, interfacing Islamic and Hindu traditions. The Indian Nizārīs experienced a major schism in the first quarter of the 10th/16th century. When Imām Shāh, one of the community's leaders, died in 919/1513, his son and successor Nar (Nūr) Muḥammad Shāh repudiated the Nizārī Imāms living in Persia and claimed the imāmate for his father and himself. He in effect founded a separate Indian Nizārī sub-sect whose adherents became known as the Imām-Shāhīs or Satpanthīs. This sect was later further subdivided, while different groups continued to split off periodically from the main Nizārī Khoja body.

The widely dispersed Nizārī communities of the post-Alamūt period, differentiated in terms of their language and socio-ethnic characteristics as well as their historical backgrounds, developed independently of one another, each retaining its own particular heritage and religious literature. Having been deprived of any central leadership under the guidance of their imāms, for quite some time after the fall of Alamūt, the Nizārī communities, especially outside of Persia, now came to be led by their own local leaders, *dā'īs*, *pīrs* or *shaykhs*, who alone could claim access to the Nizārī Imāms living secretly in Persia. In time, these local leaders established their own independent dynasties, which caused occasional schisms in the Nizārī movement. All of these factors have combined to create numerous research problems in post-Alamūt Nizārī studies, especially in view of the fact that very few reliable sources, Nizārī or otherwise, are available on the subject. In fact, it has been only during the last few decades that we have acquired some insights into the main trends in the development of post-Alamūt Nizārism.



As a result of modern progress in Nizārī studies, initiated by Ivanow, we can now distinguish three approximate periods in the history of post-Alamūt Nizārī Ismāʿīlism. The earliest period, covering roughly the first two centuries after the fall of Alamūt, is the most obscure, during which time the Persian Nizārīs attempted in vain to reassert their control over the Rūdbār region. It was also during that initial period that the Persian Nizārīs camouflaged themselves under the cloak of Ṣūfism and that a succession dispute in the family of the imāms split the Nizārī community into two factions, the Muḥammad-Shāhīs and the Qāsim-Shāhīs. The Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms, who, initially, seemingly had the support of the Nizārī majority in certain regions, emigrated to India during the earlier part of the 10th/16th century, but by the beginning of the 13th/19th century this line of the Nizārī Imāms became discontinued. The Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms, who were gradually acknowledged by the Nizārī majoritarian, emerged in Anjudān, a village in central Persia, at least by the second half of the 9th/15th century. This marks the beginning of the second period in post-Alamūt Nizārism, designated by Ivanow as the Anjudān revival, a renaissance in Nizārī thought and *daʿwa* activity. During this phase, lasting for about two centuries, the Nizārī Imāms of the Qāsim-Shāhī line, who developed close relations with the Nīʿmat Allāhī Ṣūfī order in Persia, attempted to extend their control over the outlying Nizārī communities in Syria, Central Asia and India, where great numbers had hitherto acknowledged the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms or had come to owe their immediate allegiance to their hereditary dynasty of *pīrs*.

Under the more favourable conditions created by the adoption of Twelver Shīʿism as the state religion in Ṣafawid Persia, the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms conducted the *daʿwa* activities more openly. The Anjudān period also witnessed a revival in literary activities amongst the Nizārīs of Persia and some adjoining areas, who now produced the first doctrinal treatises after the fall of Alamūt. In the second half of the 12th/18th century, the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms, who had meanwhile moved from Anjudān to the nearby village of Kahak and thence to Kirmān, began to acquire political prominence in Persia under the Zand and Qājār dynasties. By the middle of the 13th/19th century, when the Nizārī Imām had become known to the outside world as the Āghā Khān and the seat of the Nizārī Imāmate had been transferred to India, the Nizārīs entered the modern phase of their history. This period in Nizārī history has been characterized by the efforts of the Nizārī Imāms, or the Āghā Khāns, to consolidate their leadership



over the community and improve the socio-economic conditions of their followers, especially of those living on the Indian subcontinent and on the coast of East Africa.

By contrast to the Ṭayyibīs, the literary output of the Nizārīs has always remained meagre. The difficult conditions under which the Nizārīs have often lived and the generally limited standard of literacy and intellectual accomplishment attained by the community until recent times made it almost impossible for the Nizārīs to produce outstanding theologians and authors comparable to the great Yamanī Ṭayyibī *dā'īs*. This dearth of education, together with the specific doctrinal trends of the Alamūt period, caused the post-Alamūt Nizārīs, especially outside of Syria, to lose interest in studying the literature of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlīs, a literature preserved and utilized mainly by the Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlīs. Of all the Nizārī communities, only the Syrian Nizārīs have preserved a certain number of the classical Ismā'īlī treatises of the Fāṭimid period. The few doctrinal treatises written during the post-Alamūt period essentially retain the Nizārī teaching of the late Alamūt period; one does not come across any major or original work in the literature of this period. Furthermore, until more recent times, the post-Alamūt Nizārīs did not show any interest in studying the history of their sect, and consequently did not undertake to compile any historical works. It is, therefore, not surprising that many present-day Nizārīs have continued to remain rather ill-informed about their past heritage and the development of the Ismā'īlī movement in general. Needless to repeat that the various Nizārī communities of the post-Alamūt period, separated geographically and by language barriers, have developed distinctive literary traditions of their own with little or no contact with one another.

On the basis of a mixture of geographical, linguistic, ethnological, and other criteria, the Nizārī literature of the post-Alamūt period can be classified into four main categories; namely, the Persian, the Central Asian, the Syrian and the Indian sources. The sources produced in Persia, Afghanistan and the upper Oxus region are written entirely in the Persian language, while the Syrian sources are in Arabic. The Nizārīs of the Indian subcontinent, including the Khojas, the Satpanthīs and the adherents of some lesser sub-sects, have utilized various Indian languages and dialects in committing their religious doctrines and traditions to writing. It should also be noted that our discussion of the post-Alamūt Nizārī sources refers mainly to the doctrinal works produced by the followers of the Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imāms. The Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārīs evidently produced



hujja, and invited the *mustajibs* to do likewise. Both factions of the *ahl-i tarattub* were expected to concentrate on the inner meaning of the so-called *khalqī* commandments of the Sharī'a, such as those related to praying, fasting, the *hajj* pilgrimage, and so forth, especially when not practising *taqiyya*.¹⁰³ Finally, the *ahl-i waḥdat* category consisted of the *hujja* alone, who concentrated only on the person of the imām as the manifestation of the divine word and truth. Forgetting his own self completely, the *hujja* had truly entered the spiritual realm of the *ḥaqīqa*. The paradisaal state made available to the Nizārīs of the Alamūt period by the announcement of the *qiyāma* could now, in the Anjudān period, be enjoyed by a single person, the most trusted associate of the imām.

In the meantime, the Nizārī *da'wa* had spread successfully on the Indian subcontinent.¹⁰⁴ As noted, the origins and early development of Nizārī Ismā'ilism in India remain rather obscure due to the absence of reliable sources. The *gināns* and other sectarian religious writings and traditions are often inaccurate on chronological details and on the sequence of events, frequently mixing legend with reality, especially regarding the earliest centuries of the *da'wa* activities. According to the sectarian traditions, the *da'wa* in India was initiated by the emissaries or *pīrs* despatched by the Nizārī Imāms from Persia. These emissaries, who probably began their missionary work during the later Alamūt period, at first concentrated their efforts chiefly in Sind.¹⁰⁵ It may be noted that the available information on the post-Alamūt *da'wa* activities in India stem solely from the traditions preserved by the followers of the Qāsim-Shāhī line of imāms and the Imām-Shāhīs who split off from the community. Later, we shall refer to the activities of the Muḥammad-Shāhī Imāms, notably Shāh Ṭāhīr, who resided in India.

Satgur Nūr, as noted, is reported to have been the earliest *pīr* or guru sent from Persia to India for the propagation of Nizārism, which in India became designated as Satpanth, that is, Sat Panth, the True Path.¹⁰⁶ According to the traditions, Satgur Nūr was mainly active in Pātan, Gujarāt. His shrine is located at Nawsarī near Sūrat, and the tombstone, oddly enough, gives the date as 487/1094. The next important *pīr* is Shams al-Dīn, whose activities centred on Sind. In most of the religious poetry ascribed to him, Qāsim Shāh is named as the imām of his time;¹⁰⁷ Pīr Shams al-Dīn thus seems to have flourished in the first half of the 8th/14th century. He was particularly active in Multān and Uchchh, in Sind; his mausoleum at Multān is locally known as that of Shams-i Tabrīz. The Nizārī community of the Shamsīs, who now acknowledge the Āghā Khān

Satgur Nur of
Navsari



Pir Shams

and live as goldsmiths chiefly in Multān and elsewhere in Panjāb, claim to have been converted to Nizārī Ismāʿīlism by Pīr Shams al-Dīn. The work of Shams al-Dīn was continued by his son and grandson, Naṣīr al-Dīn and Shihāb (or Ṣāhib) al-Dīn. Almost nothing is known about these two pīrs, who occupy the twenty-first and twenty-second places on the traditional lists of pīrs; it is merely reported that they conducted the *daʿwa* in secret.¹⁰⁸ Pīr Shihāb al-Dīn was, in turn, succeeded by his son Ṣadr al-Dīn. By that time in the post-Alamūt period, the chief Nizārī pīrs in India had acquired a certain degree of autonomy and had also established a hereditary dynasty.

First Jamat Khana

Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, to whom the largest number of *gināns* is attributed, played a key role in the propagation and organization of the Nizārī *daʿwa* in India. He is reported to have died sometime between 770/1369 and 819/1416;¹⁰⁹ he was thus contemporary with the Imām Islām Shāh.¹¹⁰ Ṣadr al-Dīn converted large numbers of Hindus from the Lohana caste and gave them the name of Khōja, derived from the Persian word *khwāja*, meaning lord or master. This name corresponded to the Hindu term *thakur* (or *thakkar*), also meaning master, by which the Lohanas were addressed, since they were regarded as Kshatriyas. The Lohanas and Khojas still use the Hindu designation amongst themselves. Ṣadr al-Dīn is credited with building the first Nizārī *jamāʿat-khāna*, or assembly and prayer hall, in Kotri, Sind. Subsequently, he established two other Nizārī centres in Panjāb and Kashmir and appointed their *mukhis* or leaders. The term *mukhi* (pronounced *mukī*) is derived from the Sanskrit word *mūkhyā*, meaning most important or chief. Ṣadr al-Dīn, thus, laid the foundation of the communal organization of the Indian Nizārīs who henceforth became known mainly as Khojas. In time, he extended the *daʿwa* to Gujarāt and won success amongst the Lohanas and other trading Hindu castes of that region. The centre of Ṣadr al-Dīn's activities, however, remained in Uchchh, from where he now conducted the *daʿwa* somewhat more openly. It may be noted in passing that Sind was at the time ruled by the Sammas, who around 752/1351 had succeeded the Sūmras who adhered to Ismāʿīlism. The later members of the Sūmra dynasty were probably influenced by the Nizārī *daʿwa* in Sind whilst maintaining an independent Ismāʿīlī tradition of their own, but the Sammas soon became Sunnī Muslims.¹¹¹ Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn evidently visited the Imām Islām Shāh in Persia to submit to him the *dassondh* or tithes collected from the Nizārī community of India. Ṣadr al-Dīn's shrine is located near Jetpur, in the vicinity of Uchchh, to the south of Multān. The overseers of this shrine



now consider themselves as Twelver Shī'īs and refer to the *pīr* as Ḥājī Ṣadr Shāh.

Ṣadr al-Dīn was succeeded as *pīr* by his eldest son Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn. According to the well-known hagiographical work written in India by 'Abd al-Ḥaqq b. Sayf al-Dīn Dihlawī (d. 1052/1642), Kabīr al-Dīn travelled extensively before settling down in Uchchh.¹¹² He too apparently visited the imām in Persia and converted a large number of Hindus during his *pīr*ship. The death dates mentioned for this *pīr* vary from 853/1449 to 896/1490–1491; but most probably he died around 875/1470–1471, the year mentioned in the yet unpublished *Manāzil al-aqtāb*, the history of the Imām-Shāhī sect compiled around 1237/1821 in Gujarāt by Qāḍī Raḥmat Allāh b. Ghulām Muṣṭafā.¹¹³ Kabīr al-Dīn's shrine is outside Uchchh and is locally known as Ḥasan Daryā. It is interesting to note that this *pīr* is reported to have been affiliated with the Suhrawardī Ṣūfī order, which was prevalent at the time in the region of Multān. In fact, Pīr Kabīr al-Dīn's name appears in the list of the *shaykhs* of this Ṣūfī *ṭarīqa*.¹¹⁴ Be it as it may, this indicates that in India, too, close ties had developed in the post-Alamūt period between Nizārism and organized Ṣūfism. On Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn's death, the Indian Nizārī community began to experience internal dissensions which eventually led to an important schism. Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn is said to have had eighteen sons, but his brother Tāj al-Dīn was appointed as the next *pīr* by the imām. This appointment was opposed by some of the sons of Kabīr al-Dīn, who were at the time also quarrelling amongst themselves. When Tāj al-Dīn returned from a visit to the imām in Persia, where he had gone for delivering the tithes of the Indian Nizārīs, he was accused by his nephews of embezzling a portion of the religious dues. Thereupon, the *pīr* is said either to have died of grief or committed suicide. Tāj al-Dīn, who is not recognized as a *pīr* by the later Imām-Shāhīs, died towards the end of the 9th/15th century, not long after Kabīr al-Dīn. Tāj al-Dīn's grave is located in Jhun in Sind.

After Tāj al-Dīn, Imām al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Ḥasan, better known as Imām Shāh, a son of Kabīr al-Dīn and the eponym of the Imām-Shāhī sect, tried in vain to succeed to the leadership of the Nizārī Khojas in Sind.¹¹⁵ Later, he saw the imām in Persia but was not designated by him to the position of *pīr*.¹¹⁶ On returning to India, Imām Shāh settled in Gujarāt where he spent the rest of his life and had much success in converting the local Hindus, especially from amongst the agricultural communities, to Nizārī Ismā'ilism. According to some legendary accounts, he also con-

Pīr Sadruddin,
Pīr Hasan
Kabiruddin



verted the sultan of Gujarāt, Maḥmūd Begrā (862–917/1458–1511), who gave his daughter in marriage to Imām Shāh's eldest son Nar Muḥammad. Imām Shāh, who according to some unreliable accounts seceded from the Nizārī community and himself became the founder of the Imām-Shāhī sect, is not recognized as a *pīr* by the Nizārī Khojas, who regard him merely as a *sayyid*. He died in 919/1513 in Pīrāna, the town founded by himself near Aḥmadābād, where his shrine is located. Meanwhile, due to continuing conflicts in the family of Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, the imām had not appointed a new *pīr* after Tāj al-Dīn. Instead, a book of guidance, occupying the twenty-sixth place on the traditional lists of *pīrs*, was sent to the Indian Nizārī community. This book, the already-noted *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī* containing the religious admonitions of Imām Mustanṣir bi'llāh II, appears to have reached Sind around the middle of the 10th/16th century. At the time, it will be recalled, the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms were successfully endeavouring to assert their control over the Nizārī communities of India and other remote places. Khayrkhawāh, for instance, refers to the pilgrimages of the Indian *dā'īs* for seeing the imām at Anjudān, also noting that the Indian Nizārīs by then greatly outnumbered their Persian co-religionists.¹¹⁷ The *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī* was in due course translated into Sindhī and Gujarātī and transcribed in Khojkī for the benefit of the Nizārī Khojas.

Meanwhile, Imām Shāh had been succeeded in Gujarāt by his son Nar (Nūr) Muḥammad. Imām Shāh himself had apparently remained loyal to the imāms in Persia, but Nar Muḥammad seceded from the Nizārī *da'wa* and the Khoja community, founding an independent sect. At an unknown date not long after 919/1513, Nar Muḥammad demanded that the *dassondh* or tithes should henceforth be delivered to him in Gujarāt, instead of being sent through Sind to the imām in Persia. Nar Muḥammad had now in fact claimed the imāmate for himself, and, retrospectively, for his father. The new instructions caused a schism in the Nizārī community of Gujarāt. In particular, Nar Muḥammad's requests and claims were rejected by a certain Kheta, who was the *mukhi* of some 18,000 converted Hindus. But the majority of Nar Muḥammad's followers in Gujarāt sided with him and formed the separate Imām-Shāhī sect, also known as Satpanthī. A minority of Nar Muḥammad's earlier followers, together with other Nizārīs of Gujarāt, remained loyal to the Nizārī Imāms and the main *da'wa* in India. Nar Muḥammad died in 940/1533–1534, and was buried in his father's mausoleum in Pīrāna. The Imām-Shāhīs later came to deny any connection with Ismāʿīlism, though they continued to acknowledge the

Nur
Muhammad
Shah split the
sect



line of the Ismā'īlī Imāms until Islām Shāh, the thirtieth Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imām. They do not, however, recognize some of the Nizārī Imāms, such as Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh, Muḥammad b. Islām Shāh, and the latter's successors until the schism. They claim that the early *pīrs*, until Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, were in fact Twelver Shī'īs. They do not recognize Tāj al-Dīn as one of their *pīrs*; and Nar Muḥammad is regarded as their last imām.

After Nar Muḥammad, there occurred several splits in the Imām-Shāhī community due to succession disputes over the position of the *pīr*. Different factions followed different lines of *pīrs* from amongst Nar Muḥammad's descendants. In Awrangzib's reign, the *sajjāda-nishīn* or leader of the Imām-Shāhī community centred in Pīrāna was a certain Shāhjī Mīrān Shāh. In 1067/1657, he had succeeded his father, Muḥammad Shāh, a descendant of Nar Muḥammad's son Sa'īd Khān, as the *pīr* of the so-called Āṭhṭhiyā branch of the sect. Having heard about the heretical beliefs of Shāhjī, Awrangzib summoned the aged saint to have his beliefs examined by the Sunnī jurists of his court. Shāhjī was forced to set off for Awrangzib's court by the local governor of Gujarāt. But Shāhjī died on the way, possibly poisoning himself, near Pīrāna or in Aḥmadābād. Thereupon, Shāhjī's numerous followers, especially from amongst the Mātiya Kanbis caste, launched a revolt and seized the fort of Broach.¹¹⁸ They proclaimed Shāhjī Mīrān's son and successor, Sayyid Muḥammad Shāh (d. ca. 1130/1718), as king of Broach. This rebellion, which occurred around 1100/1688–1689, was eventually suppressed by Awrangzib. The *pīr*ship of this Imām-Shāhī sub-sect remained in the hands of Shāhjī's direct descendants until Bāqir 'Alī, the last *pīr* of the Āṭhṭhiyā who died around 1251/1835. Shāhjī Mīrān's wife, Rājī Ṭāhira, founded a separate branch of the Imām-Shāhī sect. The Imām-Shāhīs, through their various branches, have tended to revert towards Hinduism. The adherents of this syncretist sect, who are now mainly located in the rural communities of Gujarāt, Khāndesh and western Madhya Pradesh, near Burhānpūr, consider themselves chiefly as Twelver Shī'īs or Sunnīs rather than Ismā'īlīs.

The immediate reaction of the Qāsim-Shāhī *da'wa* headquarters in Anjudān to the Imām-Shāhī schism in India remains unknown. In the aftermath of the dissensions in the Indian community, culminating in the secession of the Imām-Shāhīs, the imāms did not appoint any new *pīrs* in succession to Tāj al-Dīn. As noted, the *Pandiyāt-i jawānmardī* was sent to India as a book of guidance for the Nizārīs of the subcontinent. Some of

Baqir / Bakar
Ali = Athiya
Satpanth

Shahji Mira =
Burhanpur

Satpanthis
converted to
Islam



the oldest lists of *pīrs* mention after the *Pandiyāt* only one other *pīr* named **Dādū**. He is said to have been sent by the imām to Sind for the purpose of preventing the conversion of the Nizārī Khojas to Sunnism. Around 1584, however, Dādū was obliged to leave for Navanagar (Jamnagar) in Gujarāt, where he settled down with some of the Sindhī Nizārīs who had fled with him. Subsequently, **Dādū moved to Bhuj, where he died in 1593**. Dādū played an important role in reorganizing the Indian Nizārī community and in strengthening the ties of that community with the imām and the central *daʿwa* headquarters in Anjudān. Dādū's name is, however, omitted from the later lists of the Indian *pīrs*. **With the termination of the line of *pīrs*, the imāms came to be represented locally in India by *wakīls* and *bāwās*.** The latter term probably represents the Khojkī pronunciation of the Turkish and Persian word *bābā*, meaning father, and used also as an honorific for older men. Dissatisfied with the dynasty of *pīrs*, the imāms of the Anjudān period now attempted to acquire more direct controls over the Indian Nizārīs. One of the most important duties of the *wakīl* and other local representatives of the imāms was the collection of the religious dues and their proper transference to the central treasury of the *daʿwa* in Persia, located at the imām's place of residence. At the same time, some local families of Sayyids, that is, descendants of Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, maintained their influence in the Khoja Nizārī community, sometimes holding the position of *wakīl*. Remaining faithful to the imāms in Persia, they also conducted the *daʿwa* on their behalf and performed certain teaching functions in the Khoja community. The Kadiwala Sayyids, who also composed *gināns*, represent one of the most important families of such Sayyids. They are still active in Sind. Their ancestor, Sayyid Fāḍil Shāh, a descendant of Raḥmat Allāh b. Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, was originally active in the town of Kadi in Cutch around the middle of the 11th/17th century, before the family moved to Sind. In Sind, the family eventually settled around 1780 in Tando Muḥammad Khān, where the Kadiwala Sayyids still reside.

In India, the Nizārī *daʿwa* had, meanwhile, continued in Gujarāt. One group of Gujarātī Nizārīs, who had remained loyal to the imāms and their representatives in India, had come to be known as Mōmnas; a designation derived from the word *mu'min*. This term has also been used in reference to some of the Imām-Shāhī groups.¹¹⁹ **The Nizārī Mōmnas allege that in time they came to obey the Kadiwala Sayyid Fāḍil Shāh, who collected their tithes and sent them to Persia.** Pīr Mashāyikh and Ḥasan Pīr, sons of Sayyid Fāḍil, played important roles amongst the Nizārī Mōmnas of

Meaning of word "Bawa" in Imamshah Bawa



northern Gujarāt. According to the Nizārī Mōmna tradition, Mashāyikh was designated as the local head of the Nizārī *jamā'at* or community in northern Gujarāt, where he attempted to suppress the Hindu practices of the sectarians. Mashāyikh eventually settled down in Aḥmadābād and asserted his independence from the *da'wa* headquarters in Anjudān. He kept the tithes collected in the community for himself and also renounced his allegiance to the imām in Persia. Indeed, some sources report that he even converted to Sunnism and visited Awrangzīb in the Deccan. Pīr Mashāyikh is also said to have sided with this Mughal emperor against the Shī'ī rulers of Bījāpūr. Many of Mashāyikh's adherents, who later followed his descendants, converted to Sunnism, while the Nizārī Mōmnas came to support the Kadiwala Sayyids. Pīr Mashāyikh died in 1108/1697 in Aḥmadābād, and his followers later quarrelled as to whether he had been a Sunnī or a Shī'ī, causing further divisions. The matter is obscure, as Mashāyikh's writings reflect both Sunnī and Shī'ī tendencies. Azim Nanji has made the interesting suggestion that Pīr Mashāyikh may in fact have transferred his allegiance to the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī Imāms, who then resided in the Deccan, professing Sunnism for the purpose of *taqiyya*.¹²⁰ Pīr Mashāyikh's brother Ḥasan, who was active in Kathiawar, remained loyal to the Nizārī Imām and became the saint of the Nizārī Mōmnas. In addition to his mausoleum in Thanapipli near Jūnāgarh, the Nizārī Khojas and Mōmnas in 1717 constructed a shrine in Ganod, Gujarāt, as a tribute to Ḥasan Pīr. The Mōmnas, now found chiefly in Gujarāt, are sub-divided into various groups adhering to Sunnism, Twelver Shī'ism, Nizārī Shī'ism, and admixtures of these religions.

From early on, the Nizārī *pīrs* who preached the *da'wa* in India paid special attention to the beliefs and rituals of the Indian communities that were to be converted. They attempted to present the Islamic teachings and Ismā'īlī doctrines in terms that would be readily comprehensible to Hindu inhabitants of Sind, Gujarāt and other regions of the Indian subcontinent. This approach is clearly reflected in the religious content of the *gināns* which represent an interfacing of Islamic and Hindu elements. The *pīrs* condemned idol worship but they used Hindu mythology and Hindu motifs to explain certain aspects of their teachings.¹²¹ In particular they expounded within a Hindu framework the doctrine of the imāmate, especially as held by the Nizārīs of the post-*qiyāma* times. This formulation is contained in an important *ginān* entitled *Dasa Avatāra*, which is extant in three separate versions attributed to Pīr Shams al-Dīn, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, and Imām Shāh.¹²² The *Dasa Avatāra*, which like many other



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gināns is no longer in usage, conveys the post-*qiyāma* Nizārī doctrines in the light of the tenets of Vaishnavism, and presents the Nizārī Imām as the awaited saviour on the basis of Vaishnavite ideas concerning the different manifestations of the Hindu deity Vishnu through the ages.

Dasavatar of Vishnu = Ali

In general, the term *avatāra* in Vaishnavism had come to signify the manifestation of deity, viz., the assumption of different forms, anthropomorphic or otherwise, in which Vishnu descended to earth and lived there until his particular purpose was realized. The number of such *avatāras* had gradually come to be fixed at ten, whence the name of the *ginān* in question, *Dasa Avatāra*.¹²³ The ten *avatāras* were also adjusted in the *gināns* within the Hindu frame of cyclical time and history. This was accomplished on the basis of the concept of *yuga* or age, expressed in terms of the doctrine of the four *yugas* of unequal lengths, or a *mahāyuga*, referring to the four cosmic cycles wherein the universe was periodically created and destroyed. The final *yuga*, the present epoch, was called Kali Yuga, an age of evil and darkness associated with the goddess Kali, the Black. The Hindus had awaited the appearance of the tenth *avatāra* who would fight the forces of evil in the Kali Yuga, the current age of darkness. The Nizārī *pīrs* now introduced ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, instead of the standard Hindu figure of Kalki, as the tenth *avatāra* or manifestation of Vishnu. ʿAlī would thus fulfil the eschatological expectations of the Hindu converts to Nizārism by fighting the forces of evil in the Kali Yuga, the final age; he would eventually kill Kalinga, the Iblīs of Hindu mythology. Furthermore, all the imāms succeeding ʿAlī, who were recognized by the Nizārīs, were held to be identical with him in their status and authority. Consequently, each and every Nizārī Imām came to be represented as the tenth *avatāra* of Vishnu. Such explanations were easily comprehensible to the Hindus, who had been converted to Nizārism and were now taught the doctrines of the imāmate and the *qiyāma*, depicting the current imām as the expected saviour. The recognition of the true path (*sat panth*) and imām would liberate the Nizārī Khoja believers from the cycles of rebirth, opening Paradise to them. The Qurʾān was represented as the last of the Vedas, or sacred scriptures whose true interpretation (*taʾwīl*) was known only to the *pīrs*. Indeed, the *gināns* exalt the religious role of the Nizārī *pīr* or guru, who guides the believers to attain the knowledge (*ginān*) of the imām and the true religion. The traditional Ismāʿīlī cosmology and cyclical history are not treated in the *gināns* of the Nizārī Khojas and the Imām-Shāhīs.

Kuran / Quran is the last Veda

The available information on the Muḥammad-Shāhī Nizārī Imāms and

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